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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2417

June 16, 1989

FARM POPULATION MAY BE STABLE -- The number of people living on the farm has been declining for years. However, the number of people who depend on farming but do not necessarily live on the farm may be holding its own, according to a new USDA study called: "The Farm Entrepreneurial Population, 1987." In 1987, about 5.7 million people lived in households associated with the operation of farms -- up slightly from 5.6 million in 1986. Contact: Margaret A. Butler (202) 786-1536.

VEAL PRODUCERS say accusations made by animal welfare groups are based on misperceptions and lack of animal husbandry experience and expertise, the Washington Post reported recently. As veal has become an increasingly fashionable meal, animal welfare groups have mounted a campaign against milk-fed calves. "My livelihood depends on the care we give those animals," says Eric Fleck, president of the American Veal Association. To interview Eric Fleck contact: Dean Conklin (312) 467-5520.

USDA FARM PROGRAM OUTLAYS for 1988 disaster assistance totaled \$3.71 billion, with benefits to 778,966 farmers, as of the end of May. Nearly \$90 of each \$100 in disaster assistance was in crop loss program payments -- \$3.28 billion to 669,477 producers. Those are primarily farmers in drought-designated counties who had crop production losses of 35 percent or more last year. Contact: Bob Feist (202) 447-6787.

SEAFOOD INSPECTION? In recent testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Fisheries & Wildlife Conservation and the Environment, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Inspection Services Jo Ann Smith said the time has come to consider steps needed to ensure the safety of seafood. However, she said, it is important to emphasize the public health threat is not great to Americans who are eating fish and shellfish. "Seafood represents a small percentage of foodborne illnesses," she said. "Most of these illnesses are preventable through a strong consumer education program, although increased regulatory controls may also prove necessary." Contact: Patricia Drayne (202) 447-7608.





EATING RIGHT -- Many Americans are confused by --- and tired of -- the seemingly conflicting advice on what they should and shouldn't eat, says Susan Welsh, director of the Nutrition Education Division at USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service. USDA has just launched a new nutrition education campaign, based on the seven basic Dietary Guidelines, called: "Eating Right ... The Dietary Guidelines Way." To kick off the campaign, USDA has four new colorful, easy-to-read booklets that tell how to fix food and plan menus; fix bag lunches, snacks and desserts; shop for food and make quick meals;

and how to eat better when you eat out. Media review copies of the four booklets are available from: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445. Media only, please.

FREE FARMERS TAX GUIDE -- Did you know the IRS has a free publication to help farmers? "Farmer's Tax Guide," IRS publication #225, covers such topics as farm business expenses, tax credits, sales of farm land and soil and water conservation expenses. Copies of the publication are available by calling IRS's toll free number: (800) 424-3676.

NEXT CENTURY'S BARNYARD animals may not look very different from today's, but they could carry genes that give them natural resistance to diseases. Steers headed for consumer meat counters might be able to thrive on low-grade crop residues and fibrous plants that are barely digestible now. And chickens could live in a closed, disease-free environment and eat a pasteurized semi-liquid diet. These are predictions from USDA scientists on possible changes in U.S. animal production in the next 25 to 50 years. Contact: Robert R. Oltjen (301) 344-4050.

PEOPLE WHO ATTACK agricultural chemicals are fast on their feet and have become very skillful, Sec. Clayton Yeutter told representatives of farm and commodity groups who met at USDA recently. "They have gotten smarter; they have more money; they are well prepared; they hire good people; and they can orchestrate a very effective campaign and get their point across in a very skillful way," he said. "No doubt, environmental efficacy groups will weigh in heavily in the 1990 farm bill in a whole variety of ways," Yeutter said. "I think we ought to work with the environmentalists as best we possibly can," Yeutter said. "It is better not to have them in an adversarial relationship. It is going to take all the skill at the command of all of us to have it happen."

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1671 -- Most of us take that morning cup of coffee for granted. Not our own Pat O'Leary! Pat presents a light-hearted look at the coffee industry from farm to family coffee maker. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE #1660 -- USDA News Highlights; conservation reserve grown again; a U.S. butter sale to the USSR; new wheat crop estimates; small food companies and the export business. (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1153 -- Let's have another cup of coffee; "info-mercials" invade TV; dealing with sales people; a new baking material; sick of gypsy moths? (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, June 21, catfish production, land values report; Thursday, June 22, cherry production, poultry production; Friday, June 23, red meat production, foreign ag. trade update; Tuesday, June 27, crop/weather update; Thursday, June 29, agricultural prices, world tobacco situation; Friday, June 30, grain stocks, hogs/pigs report, world coffee situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA TV NEWS SERVICE -- (June 15) Undersecretary Richard Crowder on Soviet butter sale; Chairman of the World Board James Donald on crop price forecast; USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on wheat & cotton harvest; USDA Economist Robert Skinner on cotton exports & use; and USDA Economist Keith Severin on Soviet grain crop.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)


OFF MIKE

WET...spring, really wet says Dave Statola (WNCT, Greenville, N.C.). But most crops are in the ground and the outlook is the best this decade.

WAIST DEEP...is the way Ron Hays (Oklahoma Agrinet, Oklahoma City) described recent rains. Wheat has been ready to harvest since last month but the ground is too wet for combines. Says disease, hail storms, and lodging -- resulting from weakened stalks caused by the freeze last February -- will likely lower yields 20 percent, Hayes says.

SPRING...rains have delayed the peak fire season period says Wally Shiverdecker (USDA, Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.) This year it should begin at the normal Aug. 1 date, compared to last year's July 1. Wet weather pattern has been helpful to Yellowstone National Park; Shiverdecker expects the dry Southwest to have an active fire season this summer.

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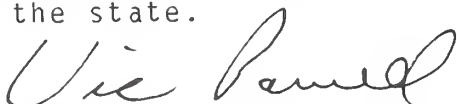

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FARMERS'...markets and roadside stands are doing big business in spring fruits and vegetables. Public demand is also being met by pick-your-own fruit operations, becoming more popular each year. Owners of these businesses can provide interesting commentary about the public and how preferences are changing.

AUDIENCES...are interested in gardening information says Roland Brooks (Cooperative Extension Service, Athens, Ga.). Gardening is a major outdoor activity, and lawn management is the most popular gardening pursuit. Lawns occupy an estimated 50,000 square miles, most having owners who use chemicals and implements that help keep green the lawn and supply stores.

OUR...thanks to the people of the great state of Kansas. They were first-class hosts to our radio and TV crew of Brenda Curtis and Lynn Wyvill who produced material during a week-long tour covering producers, facilities and conditions in the state.



VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio & Television Division